



Information and Support After a Suicide Attempt:
A Department of Veterans Affairs
Resource Guide
for Family Members of Veterans Who are Coping with Suicidality

VA VISN 19 Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center

Office of Mental Health Services, VA Central Office



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Introduction

Purpose of this Guide

This brief guide is designed to provide veterans, their families and VA care providers with resources that can serve as sources of information and support. The resources are available in various formats (e.g., websites, pamphlets) and are aimed at meeting the needs of family members of all ages.

Structure of Guide

The resources are divided into domains which are reflective of potential needs of support persons. The domains are:

- **Self Care** - Resources aimed at helping family member cope with a veteran suicide attempt;
- **Care for Others** - Resources aimed at helping adult support persons assist others who are coping with a family member/veteran suicide attempt (e.g., children);
- **Prevention Post-Attempt** - Resources aimed at helping family members assist veterans post-attempt.

Each resource includes a description, its associated domain(s), a location where the resource can be found, a source or author, and any associated cost.

A final section for acquiring additional knowledge/support entitled **Additional Resources** is also included.

If viewing this in MS Word you can follow a link by holding down your Control Key (Ctrl) and clicking the link.

This Resource Guide was created by the VISN 19 Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Centers (MIRECC), at the request of and in collaboration with the Office of Mental Health Services, VA Central Office. This resource guide is not intended to be exhaustive, and is not an endorsement of any commercial product. The guide is designed to provide information on many established resources.

A Living Document

It is expected that available resources will be developed and modified. As such, continued efforts will be aimed at updating this resource guide. Please contact Joe Huggins MSW, MSCIS, 303.399.8020 ext. 3096, joe.huggins@va.gov, with additional potential resources. Updated version of this will be available on the VISN 19 MIRECC website, http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/VISN_19_Education.asp#products.



Books/Pamphlets

1. After an Attempt: The Emotional Impact of a Suicide Attempt on Families

The booklet, created by the Feeling Blue Suicide Prevention Council, includes information regarding: Important do's and don'ts; Dealing with a traumatic event; What to say to the attempter; Ways the family can communicate their feelings; and How an attempt affects spouses, siblings and parents. The booklet is available at no cost.

Domain: Self Care, Care for Others and Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: http://feelingblue.org/docs/AFTER_AN_ATTEMPT_BOOKLET_rev.pdf

Authors: Heidi Bryan, BA, Certified QPR Trainer with Assistance from: Katie Brophy, M.S. Amy Cunningham, M.S. Robert Schwarz, Psy.D., and the American Association of Suicidology

2. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: After an Attempt - A Guide for Taking Care of Your Family Member after Treatment in the Emergency Room

This brochure was developed by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI; www.nami.org) in partnership with the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC; www.sprc.org), and addresses issues occurring overtime (from emergency room to return home). Self care tips and warning signs are highlighted. This brochure is available at no cost.

Domain: Self Care, Care for Others and Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: <http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SVP-0159/SVP-0159.pdf>

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services CMHS-SVP-0159, Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2006.

3. Suicide: Taking Care of Yourself after an Attempt

This brochure provides information for patients about how to cope and move forward with life after receiving emergency room treatment for attempting suicide. There is no cost associated with obtaining this item.

Domain: Self Care, Care for Others and Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: <http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/ken/pdf/SVP-0157/SVP-0157.pdf>

Source: NAMI- National Alliance on Mental Illness



Websites

1. Army Behavioral Health - Suicide Prevention

An Army website that serves as a connecting point to numerous resources for veterans and their families

Domain: Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: <http://www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/sprevention>

Source: Army Behavioral Health

2. Department of Navy - Minding Your Mental Health™

Website with information for family, friends and health professionals

Domain: Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location:

http://www.nehc.med.navy.mil/Healthy_Living/Psychological_Health/Mental_Health/mmh_mentalhealth.aspx

Authors: Don R. Powell, Ph.D. and the American Institute for Preventive Medicine

3. How to Talk to a Child about a Suicide Attempt in Your Family: Guides

Targeting Age Groups 4-8, 9-13 and 14-18

This information sheet is intended to serve as a guide for adults to use when talking with a 4-8, 9-13 or 14-18 year-old child about a suicide attempt in the family. It is not intended to replace the advice of a mental health professional. In fact, it may be best to use this along with professional support if you or your child is struggling with how to talk about this difficult topic. It is important to consider the child's level of development and ability to understand events when deciding how to talk with them about this issue.

Domain: Care for Others and Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/VISN_19_Education.asp#talkToKids

Source: VA VISN 19 MIRECC

4. Half of Us

This site is for college students, though other young adults may also find it useful. Developed by mtvU and The Jed Foundation, popular icons tell their own stories of recovery from depression and suicide.

Domain: Self Care, Care for Others and Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: <http://www.halfofus.com/disorder/Suicide.aspx>

Source: mtvU and The Jed Foundation.

5. Hold On: Music Video from Good Charlotte

Found on the US Army Suicide Prevention site this is a music video with dialog by survivors. The music video is oriented to teens and young adults. The hotline number at the end of this video is 1-800-SUICIDE. This number now forwards the caller to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and for Veterans 1-800-273-TALK (8255) press "1".

Domain: Self Care, Care for Others and Prevention Post-Attempt.



Location: <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Readiness/SPTRG/GoodCharlotte2.wmv>

Source: U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine: Suicide Prevention

6. How Do I Tell Them? Talking to Children about Suicide

As part of the Voice of America web audio series, Carol Loehr discusses ways to talk to children about suicide and depression.

Domain: Care for Others

Location: <http://www.modavox.com/voiceamerica/vepisode.aspx?aid=23341>

Authors: Carol Loehr with Dr. Gloria Horsley, BSN, MS, MA, CNS, MFT, MIM, Ph.D. and Dr. Heidi Horsley, BS, MS, MSW, Psy.D.

7. The Lifeline Gallery: Stories of Hope and Recovery

The Lifeline Gallery: Stories of Hope and Recovery is a project founded by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Link2Health Solutions, inc.. The Lifeline Gallery is an on-line community that allows survivors to tell their story. The site allows users to create an 'avatar', an on-line character that can help assist the survivor in telling their story.

Domain: Self Care, Care for Others and Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: <http://www.lifeline-gallery.org/>

Source: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Link2Health Solutions, inc.

8. Marine Corps Community Service - Suicide Prevention

This website designed for Marine Corps veterans and families and includes sections on: Get the Facts; Suicide in the Marine Corps; Marine & Family, Links; and Training Videos.

Domain: Care for Others and Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent/index.cfm?sid=fl&smid=1>

Source: Personal and Family Readiness Division (MR) of the Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS)

9. Sibling Survivors

Michelle Linn-Gust is an internationally known author and speaker about suicide prevention and postvention issues. She currently serves as the Survivor Division Chair for the American Association of Suicidology.

Domain: Self Care

Location: <http://www.siblingsurvivors.com/>

Source: Michelle Linn-Gust

10. TRICARE Military Healthcare Program: Suicide Prevention

TRICARE is the health care program serving active duty service members, National Guard and Reserve members, retirees, their families, survivors and certain former spouses worldwide. Information is provided on suicide prevention and survivor support.

Domain: Self Care and Prevention Post-Attempt.



Location:

<http://www.tricare.mil/mybenefit/ProfileFilter.do?&puri=%2Fhome%2FMentalHealthAndBehavior%2FConditions%2FSuicidePrevention>

Source: TRICARE: Military health care program

11. United States Coast Guard - Suicide Prevention

A website by the US Coast Guard on Suicide Prevention

Domain: Prevention Post-Attempt.

Location: http://www.uscg.mil/worklife/suicide_prevention.asp

Source: Coast Guard's Work-Life Program: Office of Work-Life



Crisis Lines

1. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll-free suicide prevention service available to anyone in suicidal crisis. Call for yourself, or someone you care about. Your call is free and confidential.

Location: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Source: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

2. Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline

The Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has founded a national suicide prevention hotline to ensure veterans in emotional crisis have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors.

Location: 1-800-273-TALK (8255), and press "1"

Source: Office of Mental Health Services, VA Central Office, National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



Additional Resources

1. American Association of Suicidology (AAS)

AAS is a membership organization for those involved in suicide prevention and intervention, or who have been touched by suicide. AAS is a leader in the advancement of scientific and programmatic efforts in suicide prevention through research, education and training, the development of standards and resources, and survivor support services.

Location: <http://www.suicidology.org/>

2. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention: Find a Support Group (AFSP)

AFSP's support group directory is organized by state. The directory is available as a public service and particular groups listed are not recommended or endorsed.

Location: <http://www.afsp.org/>

3. Military OneSource

Military OneSource is a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week, toll-free information and referral telephone service available worldwide to active duty, Reserve, and National Guard military members and their families; and to deployed civilians and their families. Users may also use the web site to order educational materials (booklets, CDs, etc.) at no charge and access consultants on-line on a 24/7 basis. Telephone numbers: United States: 1-800-342-9647 Outside the US: (country access code) 800-3429-6477 (dial all 11 numbers) (Select the applicable country access code) TTY/TTD: 800-346-9188 En español, llame al 877-989-5392

Location: <http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

4. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the nation's largest grassroots organization for people with mental illness and their families. Founded in 1979, NAMI has affiliates in every state and in more than 1,100 local communities across the country.

Location: <http://www.nami.org>

5. National Organization for People of Color Against Suicide (NOPCAS)

NOPCAS was formed to stop the tragic epidemic of suicide in minority communities. The organization is developing innovative strategies to address this urgent national problem.

Location: <http://www.nopcas.com/>



6. The Samaritans

The Samaritans are a charity, founded in 1953, which exists to provide confidential emotional support to any person, who is suicidal or despairing; and to increase public awareness of issues around suicide and depression. Trained volunteers provide this service 24 hours every day. The service is free. Services are confidential. You can talk to a trained Samaritan volunteer by e-mail, which is answered daily.

Location: <http://www.befrienders.org/>

7. Terry Bradshaw's Winning Drive Against Depression

Highlighted on many US Army sites as a resource for vets, the story that Terry Bradshaw tells is inspirational and educational.

Location: http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/spotlighthealth/2004-01-30-bradshaw_x.htm

Authors: John Morgan, Spotlight Health, with medical adviser Stephen A. Shoop, M.D. - USA Today

8. The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Inc. (TAPS) Suicide Support

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Inc. (TAPS) was founded in the wake of a military tragedy -- the deaths of eight soldiers aboard an Army National Guard aircraft in November 1992. In the months and years following the loss of their loved ones, the survivors turned to various grief support organizations for comfort; but when they turned to each other for comfort and to share common fears and problems, they found strength and truly began to heal. They realized that the tragedy they shared, losing a loved one in the line of military duty, was far different from other types of losses. They shared pride in their spouses' service to America, and tremendous sadness at the ultimate sacrifice their loved ones made.

Location: <http://www.taps.org/>

9. Traumatic Brain Injury and Suicide: Information and Resources for Clinicians

A brochure provides information about the link between traumatic brain injury and suicide.

Location: http://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/VISN_19_Education.asp#tbiAndSuicide

Source: VA VISN 19 MIRECC

10. VA Mental Health Suicide Prevention

A resource page for veteran's, their families, and care providers related to suicide prevention.

Location: http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/MENTALHEALTH/suicide_prevention/index.asp

Source: Office of Mental Health Services, VA Central Office



11. Vet Centers

Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to veterans who served in a combat zone. Services are also available to family members for military related issues.

Location: <http://www.vetcenter.va.gov/>

Source: Veterans Health Administration (VHA)